

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OES-06 DLOS-06
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8898
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR GR CY TU
SUBJECT: REACTION TO BITSIOS-CAGLAYANGIL STRASBOURG
MEETING AND CYPRUS

1. THE STRASBOURG MEETING BETWEEN GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER
DIMITRI BITSIOS AND HIS TURKISH COUNTERPART, IHSAN CAGLAYANGIL,
RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION AND WAS GENERALLY WELL RECEIVED
OVER THE WEEKEND IN THE GREEK MEDIA. THE ENCOUNTER WAS EVEN
PLAYED AS DEPICTING AN OVERALL IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN
THE TWO COUNTRIES. REPORTING WAS ESSENTIALLY FACTUAL. WITH
ESSENTIALLY NO INFORMATION AS TO WHAT ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE AT THE
PRIVATE MEETING, THE STORIES DWELT ON THE JOINT STATEMENT
ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING AND THE COMMENTS WHICH
THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS MADE TO CORRESPONDENTS SUBSEQUENTLY.

2. THE PRESS NOTED THAT, IN THE "SPIRIT" OF THE BERN
AGREEMENT, THE GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER EXPECTED THERE WOULD
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NOT BE ANY REPEAT OF THE CRISIS CAUSED BY THE TURKS LAST
SUMMER. THE MEDIA ALSO PRINTED SOME OF BITSIOS COMMENTS
UPON HIS RETURN TO ATHENS ON JAN 30, MAINLY:

--THAT ON JAN 31 EXPERTS FROM BOTH SIDES WOULD
BEGIN TALKS ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF ISSUE;

--THAT THERE WOULD BE CONTINUED CONTACT
THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS (I.E., IN ATHENS BETWEEN
THE MFA AND THE TURKISH EMBASSY) ON THE QUESTION OF
THE AEGEAN AIR SPACE;

--THAT HE AND CAGLAYANGIL WOULD MEET AGAIN "AROUND APRIL";

--THAT HIS MEETING WITH THE TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER "WAS
A VERY GOOD MEETING. IT WAS HELD IN A GOOD ATMOSPHERE,
AND I HOPE IT WILL HELP"; AND

--THAT THE TIME WAS NOT "RIPE" FOR A MEETING BETWEEN
PRIME MINISTERS CARAMANLIS AND DEMIREL.

3. ILLUSTRATIVE HEADLINES INCLUDE: LIBERAL, OPPOSITION
TO VIMA: "PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE AIR SPACE TALKS THROUGH
THE BITSIOS-CAGLAYANGIL MEETING"; PRO-GOVT KATHIMERINI:
"THE IMPROVEMENT IN GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS ON A STEADY COURSE
FOLLOWING YESTERDAYS MEETING OF MESSRS. BITSIOS-CAGLAYANGIL--
THE TWO MINISTERS ORGANIZED PROGRESS ON ALL PENDING MATTERS--
THE INFORMATION ON A CARAMANLIS-DEMIREL MEETING IS PREMATURE";
COMMUNIST (KKE-INTERIOR) AVGHI: "'PROGRESS' IN THE
BITSIOS-CAGLAYANGIL TALKS"; COMMUNIST (KKE-EXTERIOR)
RIZOSPASTIS: "THE BITSIOS-CAGLAYANGIL MEETING--WILL THERE BE
A CARAMANLIS-DEMIREL MEETING?"; PRO-GOVERNMENT AKROPOLIS:
"PROGRESS ON ALL CRITICAL GREECE-TURKEY ISSUES--
BITSIOS: THE CRISIS IS GONE"; RIGHT-WING ELEFTHEROS COSMOS:
"MESSRS BITSIOS AND CAGLAYANGIL SEE OPTIMISTIC PROSPECTS
FOLLOWING YESTERDAYS LONG TALK IN STRASBOURG--'UNLESS THE
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TURKS ARE AGAIN PROVOCATIVE,' SAYS THE GREEK MINISTER";
CONSERVATIVE VRADYNI:"MR BITSIOSRETURNED--TALKS REGARDING
THE AEGEAN WILL BEGIN IN LONDON TODAY--THE MOMENT FOR
CARAMANLIS-DEMIREL MEETING HAS NOT COME"; PRO-GOVT APOYE-
VMATINI: "SECOND ROUND IN THE CONTINENTAL SHELF ISSUE
WILL BEGIN TODAY IN LONDON--MR CARAMANLIS WAS BRIEFED";
LEFTIST ELEFTHEROTYPIA: "A CARAMANLIS-DEMIREL MEETING--'STILL
NOT RIPT'--A FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN APRIL."

4. THERE HAS BEEN RELATIVELY LITTLE EDITORIAL COMMENT.
VRADYNI AND ESTIA COMPLAINED AT THE PAUCITY OF INFORMATION.
SINCE THE GOG WAS SO TIGHT LIPPED OVER WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED
AT THE MEETING, BOTH NEWSPAPERS REASONED, IT WAS NOT
POSSIBLE TO SAY THAT THERE HAS BEEN ANY "PROGRESS" AS A
CONSEQUENCE OF THE TALKS. ELEFTHEROTYPIA COMMENTED THAT
THE NEXT CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS WILL BE IN
APRIL IN ORDEER TO GIVE ENOUGH TIME FOR BOTH SIDES TO SEE HOW
THE "WASHINGTON INITIATIVE" DEVELOPS.

5. ON CYPRUS-RELATED SUBJECTS, THE GREEK MEDIA WIDELY ANTICIPATED THE APPOINTMENT OF CLARK CLIFFORD TO HEAD THE US MISSION WHICH IS EXPECTED SOON. THERE WERE SCATTERED REPORTS THAT AT THE NEXT MAKARIOS-DENKTASH MEETING MAPS WILL BE EXAMINED, WITH FAMAGUSTA BEING RETURNED TO THE GREEK-CYPRIOTS. APOYEVMATINI CLAIMED IN A STORY FROM NICOSIA THAT THE BRITISH ARE PREPARING A MAP AS A BASIS FOR A TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENT. THE SAME NEWSPAPER QUOTED CYPRIOT SOURCES IN STRASBOURG AS SAYING THAT DENKTASH'S OFFER TO REDUCE TURKISH CYPRIOT TERRITORY TO 32.8 PERCENT IS UNACCEPTABLE, BUT ACKNOWLEDGED IT IS AN OFFER THAT LEAVES ROOM FOR NEGOTIATION. KUBISCH

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